



## TRANSCRIPCIÓN ORIGINAL DE STUDIO OCHENTA

### HOW NO TO TRAVEL - EPISODE 2 - TABASCO SAUCE

0:00

Some astronaut was probably like this food tastes really bad.

0:05

Can I get some hot sauce?

0:09

Hi, this is Iona and this is Luis and we're your host of How Not To Travel podcast season three, fasten your seat belts and take your seat at the table.

0:18

In this season, we're traveling around the world from our dinner table to see how cultural exchange contributed to some of the world's most famous food this week.

0:28

Tabasco sauce isn't Tabasco sauce.

0:34

Technically Mexican.

0:36

Well, that's the question to start this episode about Tabasco sauce.

0:41

I mean, I guess for me like Tabasco sounds Mexican and I know that there is a state in Mexico called Tabasco.

0:50

So, I mean, it's a Mexican, right?

0:52

You're right.

0:53

Tabasco is a state in Mexico and that's basically the end of where the Mexican element of Tabasco comes from.

1:04

So, so it's not Mexican, it's not Mexican.

1:07

No, it's technically a very, very little bit Mexican.

1:12

It sounds Mexican.

1:14

It's spicy, which is usually what I associate with Mexico.

1:19

It's sold like a Mexican sauce.

1:21

It's in the Hispanic ethnic food section of the supermarket.

1:24

And despite all of that, it's still not actually Mexican.

1:28

OK.

1:29

So tell me the story.

1:30

Where is it from?

1:31

Do you wanna like take a shout at where, where you might think it's from?

1:35

I actually kind of think I know where it's from.

1:39

So one time I went to visit a plantation in Louisiana and it was called the Whitney plantation.

1:46

And there they told me that they hold claim to the Tabasco sauce, but that actually it was used as medicine that was prepared by an enslaved woman for her slave master to cure him of illnesses.

2:05

But I don't know if that's true if that's like an urban myth.

2:07

Like I have done no research.

2:09

Wow.

2:10

I had never heard about that specific myth but it is American and it is from Louisiana and it's not even made by some Mexican person who like moved to Louisiana who started living there.

2:24

It was actually made by an Irish guy.

2:27

So he's an Irish American man.

2:30

His name is Edmund mcilhaney and he invented this sauce just a little over 100 and 50 years ago, 18 68.

2:40

So 18 68 Louisiana Southern United States post Civil War.

2:47

And so in this context is where Edmund mcilhaney invents Tabasco sauce.

2:54

And he does it in Avery Island, which is in Louisiana.

2:58

Never been neither have I.

3:00

But it's still the place where all Tabasco sauce is made.

3:04

It's also its headquarters where every single Tabasco sauce is bottled and distributed worldwide.

3:11

OK.

3:11

So you're telling me that an Irish American person got to an island in Louisiana somehow and they decided to create hot sauce.

3:23

Like there has to be a story there like how did that happen?

3:26

So Edmund Mil, right, Irish American 18 68 if you look at a picture of him or a portrait of him, Abraham Lincoln vibes for sure.

3:35

And when I told you it was just a tiny, tiny bit Mexican.

3:40

This is because this man Edmund mcilhaney was once gifted, these very special little peppers called Tabasco peppers.

3:51

These are very small kind of sweetish peppers and he was given the peppers and given seeds.

4:00

So he planted these peppers on Avery Island.

4:04

So technically the very first peppers that he tried and that gave him the idea to do this were probably from Mexico.

4:13

We don't even exactly know that for sure.

4:15

It might have been for example, from another Central American country.

4:19

But the name of the pepper is Tabasco peppers and the peppers are named after the state of Tabasco.

4:26

But there's really no way to know if the peppers that he got were actually grown and transported from Tabasco.

4:34

Do we know who gave it to him?

4:36

I don't know exactly who gave it to him.

4:38

But I think it's also good to mention from the beginning that Tabasco, it's a brand, it's a company and it's a company that has continuously made Tabasco sauce in the very same place for 100 and 50 years.

4:51

What's interesting about this is that they have documented their story quite well for marketing purposes.

4:57

So we can definitely read a lot about the history of Tabasco from the Tabasco Sauce website.

5:04

The problem with that is that of course, there are always gonna be details that are curated by the brand itself.

5:10

So like there's little way to know to do other research and like try to see other details that the brand themselves won't disclose or won't share.

5:20

Right?

5:20

Totally.

5:20

So it really could have been like an enslaved woman who brought her peppers with her, could have been a soldier coming back from the Mexican American war.

5:30

Could have been literally anyone.

5:32

It's funny how they just conveniently were like he was gifted these peppers, but by who and then like he decided to plant them and that is where it all started and then he decided to start experimenting and making the sauce iona.

5:48

Do you happen to know how many ingredients there are in Tabasco sauce?

5:54

Like peppers and vinegar?

5:56

Two and one more salt but peppers and vinegar are correct.

6:01

One also might imagine that a sauce like Tabasco would have like several ingredients and like food colorings and other chemicals.

6:08

But no, it's just, it's just those three and it's always been that way since the beginning.

6:14

Did you know that Tabasco sauce isn't the only ingredient that every island is famous for?

6:21

In fact, before the tobacco company set up shop there.

6:24

It was well known and coveted for something else.

6:27

Salt Edmund mcilhaney, famous first peppers may have come to him from far away, but to get another one of his key ingredients for Tabasco, he didn't have to leave the island.

6:39

It turns out the place actually sits above a huge salt dome.

6:43

And during the civil war, the confederate and union armies fought over it for this very reason.

6:49

salt mining continues to be an essential industrial activity here.

6:58

So how did he come up with a secret special makeup of these three ingredients for de so bomb.

7:03

He started experimenting by crushing Tabasco peppers and adding salt and then he added white wine vinegar.

7:10

And that is basically the recipe that we know today.

7:14

He even originally made the first few batches of the sauce in perfume bottles.

7:17

So picture like I kind of picture like this very homemade very diy procedure and just putting it in perfume bottles.

7:25

I guess that makes sense because it looks like you could like spray.

7:28

And I think that's also why the bottle kind of looks like that today, which by the way is also an interesting point that Tabasco logo.

7:36

If you look at it, it has a very vintage look to it because it's been, it basically hasn't changed.

7:44

There were a couple of iterations of the logo at the very beginning, but this one has been around for definitely more than a century.

7:51

What's interesting here is that the product itself also tells us a lot of information.

7:55

I don't know if you want to read the logo.

7:57

I guess it says like Mick Company.

8:00

So it is, I mean, that is a very Irish name.

8:04

I never would have noticed that before.

8:06

I literally just noticed Tabasco and I thought immediately Mexican, but literally, the Irish part is slapped on it too.

8:13

And not only that, it says Avery Island, Louisiana.

8:16

So I mean, it definitely refers to the spicy island that he grows.

8:20

All of these on.

8:21

Most people might just look at the word in the middle and maybe even salsa.

8:27

Well, this one is in Spanish because we bought it in Mexico of course, but I'm sure it's different in every language.

8:32

But basically, it should say something like Tabasco hot sauce.

8:35

But then if you look at the other details, you can see the name of and Avery Island.

8:40

Oh dang.

8:41

Look at the back of this bottle.

8:42

Read this OK.

8:45

This is interesting.

8:46

It says Tabasco sauce was present during the excavation of the tomb of the Egyptian pharaoh.

8:53

So basically all the way to Egypt at the tomb of King Tut.



8:59

So Tabasco has traveled way more than I have.

9:02

And what's interesting is that it hasn't changed basically at all.

9:06

So I wanted to go in a little deeper on how it's made because we already went through the ingredients, right?

9:13

It has peppers, salt and vinegar.

9:16

But originally all the peppers were grown and harvested in Avery Island.

9:23

But because they became much more successful and there was much more demand for it.

9:28

They needed to plant the peppers in other places, right.

9:31

So they decided to start growing them in Mexico in Central America, South America and in some parts of Africa.

9:39

But then they all get shipped back to Avery Island, which is to this day still the only place that basically makes the mixture of the sauce and bottles and distributes it.

9:52

Did you know that Tabasco peppers are harvested when they've turned a very specific shade of red since it only has three ingredients.

10:01

Tabasco sauce has no food coloring yet.

10:03

It always has the same shade of bright red.

10:06

And this is because harvesters use a tiny red stick painted with a specific color and compare the peppers with it.

10:13

Peppers should never be too green or too mature to be added to the sauce.

10:18

This little stick, which is just a little shorter than the regular bottle of Tabasco sauce is affectionately called Baton Rouge.

10:26

And you can actually buy your own on the Tabasco website.

10:34

But before the bottling and distribution, there is also one key step.

10:39

What was that?

10:40

It has to age kind of like wine.

10:43

Basically, it ages in wooden barrels for three years, three years.

10:49

That's a long time to have like a return on product.

10:51

Historically, there have been moments where because of certain climate situations, natural disasters and that sort of thing, the peppers that they grow in different parts of the world, they don't have a good season sometimes.

11:04

And so the problem with that is that down the line, they have scarcity later, right?

11:09

That is actually one of the reasons why they started growing them in other places to control for that.

11:15

That is so smart.

11:16

So they're like, ok, if one location goes down, at least we have these other locations so that supply chain doesn't stop.

11:23

I guess the salt and the vinegar is yes, it adds to the taste, but it also is preserving the pepper inside.

11:29

And that's, I think the key to its success in many ways, it's a simple sauce.

11:34

It's easy to make, it's only three ingredients, but it's also made to last.

11:40

Yeah.

11:40

And I guess that's why it hasn't changed in 100 and 50 years.

11:43

Tabasco is like a flavor that I can always count on.

11:46

Whereas like, you know, homemade salsa is variable, like the salsa in one restaurant is not going to be the same salsa, the next restaurant.

11:53

I'm glad you brought that up because basically Tabasco is actually not originally or at least, not entirely meant to be eaten on its own.

12:03

At least historically, the way to use Tabasco was often marketed more as a way to add flavor to your dishes or to your meals, you know, so rather than like having it directly on chips or something like that.

12:19

You would a and this is interesting.

12:22

There's a lot of beautiful vintage ads of Tabasco sauce from like the 19 fifties that basically said something like, just add a few drops and you'll spice things up with your casseroles or with your spam dishes or with so many different dishes.

12:39

There's actually this quote that I love from this Tabasco Skinny dip recipe ad, which is interesting because Tabasco heavily marketed itself through recipes.

12:50

So like they, they have a lot of recipe books, all of them include Tabasco sauce, of course.

12:55

So this particular recipe ad says, and I just love this.

13:00

This is, this is from 1973 and it reads like it right?

13:04

Would you like to read it?

13:05

It says dip witches sandwich spreads.

13:09

You make with dips, don't yawn your way through another summer sandwich.

13:13

Get with these exciting new spreads.

13:15

You make yourself take a package of Fritos, brand green onion taco or bean dip blend in a few goodies and a measure of Tabasco brand pepper sauce made from a family recipe.

13:25

Watched over for more than 100 years and press mom.

13:29

What did you put in the sandwich?

13:30

I like it.

13:32

It's very cheesy, but I see what you're saying.

13:34

Like it's telling you exactly the type of foods that you need to put it on.

13:38

It's telling you how much and then it also is baking in the history like this has been here for a long time.

13:43

So you're going to love it.

13:44

So it's like going back to that original flavor, that sort of generations old flavor that we've all grown to love.

13:52

Basically, Tabasco was able to brand itself in such a way that it became a staple for astronauts in space stations and in the military, both the military meals ready to eat and the food that you can take to space has very strict requirements of how it should be packaged and dried and prepared to avoid any sort of spoiling.

14:19

And of course, in the case of the space station, to avoid any sort of like bread crumbs or anything that could, you know, tamper with any sort of machinery up there.

14:29

Isn't there like special packaging where you have to like dry the liquid or something?

14:33

Despite all of that, Tabasco is actually in astronaut food.

14:38

I feel like it was some astronaut was probably like this food tastes really bad.

14:43

can I get some hot sauce?

14:44

That's what I think happened.

14:46

Exactly.

14:46

But why do you think they chose Tabasco?

14:49

Everyone knows it?

14:50

And it's such such a well known brand that it had, it had the reputation.

14:56

Did you know that Tabasco is in more countries than mcdonald's?

15:02

The sauce is available in 100 and 85 countries worldwide compared to only 100 and 19 countries where you could get a Big Mac.

15:09

It was already available in Europe, Asia and Africa before the end of the 19th century and is a favorite of the British monarchy.

15:17

The queen mother is said to have enjoyed Tabasco so much.

15:20

She sent her staff all over London to purchase it.

15:23

And in 2009, Queen Elizabeth, the second awarded the company a royal warrant.

15:34

Despite the fact that the sauce is aged in barrels like wine, it has something very different from wine, which is that it's always made to be exactly the same, right?

15:45

Like with wine when you age it, of course, like every year it's slightly different because of differences in temperature and soil and even the same wine in different years will of course, taste differently, right?

15:56

Whereas with Tabasco sauce, it's always meant to be exactly the same which I find it really interesting, it's like consistent all the time.

16:03

Yeah.

16:04

But also I've seen other flavors of Tabasco like green jalape o Chipotle Habaneros, Buffalo.

16:11

Like, what about those things?

16:13

I'm glad you brought that up because the original Tabasco sauce of course, dates back to 18 68.

16:19

But then the Tabasco brand eventually decided to experiment with other flavors.

16:24

So then they added green jalapeno, they added a, they added Buffalo Wing sauce, garlic sriracha sauce.

16:34

And so now, of course, you see all of these different kinds of sauces in the Tabasco line of products and that's basically just the way that they diversified their products, right?

16:46

But their biggest seller is of course, still their original recipe.

16:52

Interesting.

16:53

Did you know that Tasco once inspired an opera, an entire opera about this hot sauce?

17:01

And I love the Little History behind it.

17:03

It's called the Burlesque Opera of Tabasco.

17:06

It's called burlesque because in that era, that word referred to a comedic parody, often of an opera.

17:13

So it wasn't like Moulin Rouge with women dancing around.

17:16

Yeah.

17:16

Not really like a cabaret style, but sort of like a light operetta sort of thing.

17:22

Definitely meant to be a comedy and something to be lighthearted.

17:27

A and to us.

17:36

Oh, for I strike for more notice.

17:46

Ok.

17:46

So, but what's the plot, the synopsis of the opera starts in Tangier Morocco in the late 18 hundreds.

17:56

So there are some sea traders who arrive in Tangier and they comment on their hopes of finding a little romance in this quite exotic country.

18:05

And then, you know, they're talking about what they traded that day.

18:08

But then what's interesting is that the Tabasco sauce literally saves the day how these guys get into some shenanigans, right?

18:18

And just in the nick of time, they arrive with a boat with crates of Tabasco and it had been docked in the port of Tangier and in his delight, the which is like the sultan of Spicy basically agrees to pardon someone for something he did again.

18:34

Like this is a whole story, of course.

18:36

But basically Tabasco saves the day.

18:38

Because it arrives in the nick of time for the sultan to forgive someone for something that he did because he liked the Tabasco.

18:45

Like he tried it and was like, you know what?

18:47

Fine.

18:48

Exactly.



18:49

Yeah.

18:49

Wow.

18:50

I would love to give Tabasco to my boss and be like,, sorry, I made this mistake, but here's some Tabasco.

18:57

So did mckinney know about this opera?

18:59

And does he know that his, you know, famous Tabasco hasn't made it to, I guess the big stage, basically a Boston volunteer militia commissioned a composer and a librettist to create the opera as a fundraiser for the New Armory.

19:16

And then because they intended to perform the opera commercially, he required the permission of the mcilhaney company to use the trademark to, to be able to actually name it the burlesque opera of Tabasco and the Minney Company agreed.

19:32

But as part of its approval, they had a couple of conditions, what are they?

19:38

So one of them was, and I absolutely love this.

19:41

One of the conditions required them to pass out samples of Tabasco sauce during the production stop.

19:48

Like during the performance, they were passing out Tabasco sauce.

19:52

This is like Oprah, like you get a Tabasco sauce, you get a Yeah, it's just so much fun.

19:58

I love the idea of going to an opera and also having Tabasco sauce at the same time, like the juxtaposition of hot sauce and opera is not something that I would ever thought about, like, the only

operas I've been to are in Vienna where my grandfather took me and I fell asleep halfway through because I was like, you know, they sing in Italian or German.

20:17

And it's like, I don't know anything that's going on.

20:19

I'm half asleep.

20:21

But if there was Tabasco or some hot sauce, like it'd probably keep me awake.

20:25

And if the sauce that you're eating doesn't keep you awake, then maybe the giant paper mache Tabasco sauce bottle that appears on stage during the performance might actually do that.

20:35

Wait, wait, wait, wait.

20:37

So they brought basically a Tabasco pinata on stage, going back to its Mexican non me roots but Mexican roots, they brought a Tabasco pinata on stage and yeah, that would definitely have kept me awake for sure.

20:54

I just love this so much.

20:56

It's so literally on brand.

20:58

So let's get this straight.

21:00

The chili pepper traveled to New Orleans.

21:03

We're not really sure where exactly the chili pepper came from.

21:07

Possibly Central America, possibly Mexico, maybe Tabasco, but maybe not.

21:12

And it gets to New Orleans and it arrives in this man's hand and he takes it to an island where he grows it.

21:20

But then from there, he grows it all over the world just in case something happens to his crop and he has like backup and then it travels to outer space.

21:32

So this is the tale of the traveling Tabasco sauce.

21:37

It's definitely gone.

21:38

Places that no man has gone before.

21:41

Exactly.

21:42

OK.

21:42

I have a serious question.

21:44

I just want to say that Mexicans have a very high, high tolerance for spice, which is one of the things I admire most about Mexico in your Mexican opinion of this non Mexican sauce.

21:54

Would you deem this spicy?

21:56

Yes or no.

21:57

I would consider it spicy.

21:59

Yes.

21:59

So there's this whole thing or like in Mexico you always say no or it's not spicy unless you're like literally tearing up and coughing, right?

22:09

I don't really abide by that that much because I mean, of course, Tabasco does have a flavor and it's a good one and it does have a kick, right?

22:16

A spice.

22:16

So it's definitely spicy.

22:18

But I think even though you can actually do this with Scoville units in determining how spicy a particular sauce is.

22:25

It's also true that there are different kinds of spice, right?

22:28

Like it just doesn't taste the same as, as a Mexican sauce.

22:32

So to conclude, Tabasco is not Mexican guys, it's not Mexican.

22:38

But I also don't think it's necessarily wrong that people might think it is because I've also heard from people worldwide that like they have Taco Night and they have tacos with Tabasco sauce and like they just sort of immediately think of Mexico when they have the sauce.

22:57

But even though it's not how we usually eat tacos, it's still fine.

23:01

You know, it's just kind of like the product of a happy accident that ended up associating this sauce to Mexico.

23:08

And it's good, even though it's not very popular in Mexico, or at least we don't eat it that way.

23:14

It's just fascinating to see how it's traveled so many different places and also stood the test of time and that's it for this episode.

23:28

If you're still hungry for more, stick around and listen to our other episodes of this season.

23:34

How Not To Travel is produced by Studio O and hosted by Doctor Iona and me, Luis Lopez.

23:40

Our executive producer is Laurie Martinez production and sound design by me and Sande.

23:47

Our production coordinator is Catalina H Velez.

23:50

And our social media manager is Sofia Rodriguez.

23:54

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24:13

Thanks for listening and good provecho.